14: Weltfish E-4, 5 (1928-1936, 1954) 1965
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girl who was in no position to carry the responsibilities of a mature woman would normally marry a mature man. The situation finally reversed itself when, after a marriage to an older man, the woman attains maturity and the competence to maintain a household. She is now in a position to choose a handsome young man as a second husband. The young man on his part finally gains maturity at the age of forty and can sue for the hand of a young girl of fifteen and join a household where his capabilities will be appreciated. The father and father's brothers of the girl will look around for such a person for their daughter and will be glad to entertain his suit. In fact, as a young girl gained her maturity, numbers of such men would sue for her hand. The "fathers" might have some scruples about the suitors that already had a wife, chiefly because of the ill feeling it might generate between the households involved. But a man was not compelled to limit his marital relations to one woman or to one household so long as he could fulfill his obligations, i.e., provide meat for all through his exceptional talents as a hunter and horses and other luxury goods through his special ability as a warrior that could bring home booty. There was thus a certain fluidity about the marriage situation, although some marriages did last for many years.

A proper marriage was arranged with considerable formality, with special acts and mutual gift-giving on the part of both families. The element that determined the most binding unions was a substantial gift of horses to the girl's family by the suitor. The amount of the gift was a mark of the esteem in which the bride was held, and, even in the 1920's, one old woman mentioned with pride from time to time that six horses were given for her. As a woman got older, a marriage involved less and less property consideration, although a man suing for the hand of a woman in her prime would be likely to give a horse to her brother or a relative who stood in an analogous relationship as a mark of his respect for her and an earnest of good faith with her family. Everyone felt that an informal liaison without some family arrangements was bound to be a passing thing.

A man's obligations to his children were to some extent independent of these considerations. The Pawnees were very literal about fatherhood. For a child to be accepted in the community with any decent status, its physiological father must be known. In any given month from one menstrual period to the next, a woman had to confine her sexual activities to one man only, and when she was aware through the cessation of menstruation that she had conceived, she was required to notify the man and point out on what occasion of intercourse together the child was conceived. The man was then obligated, until the child reached full maturity of eighteen or more, to provide it with fresh meat in whatever household it might be residing and in other ways to be concerned with its well-being. A woman who departed from this iron-clad rule was unable to

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851 848 convince a man of his physiological paternity, and her child would then be a social outcast. It would be known as *pira-paru*, "hidden child," since the mother would be ashamed and try to hide it when her brothers came to visit. The child would be subject to many insults and humiliations throughout its life. In these terms, whatever the sentiments of the parents for each other, the child always had a legal right to the care of both its parents, clearly identified as its physical progenitors. Children were normally cared for by their grandmothers, and it was quite possible that various fortunes placed the child in one household with its grandmother, its mother in another household, and the father in still another. The obligations for support, however, remained incumbent on both parents.

593 221 The household as a working group of coordinated members was precisely organized, and each household had the same general structure. However, twice a year when the tribe set out on its semiannual buffalo hunts, the household work group fragmented itself into many smaller groupings, which reassorted themselves so that an able hunter became the nucleus of each new composite grouping. When they returned to the village the households did not necessarily reassemble with the same personnel as before. This was entirely optional, and there were many reasons why people might decide to join a different household group than the one they had been with before leaving. However, it was not too hard to establish a working household on this basis even twice a year, since the pattern of operation was the same everywhere. The three duplicate stations on the north and south sides of the lodge with their full complement of the young, mature, and old women was a frame into which any individual woman could fit herself in whatever household she entered with little loss of efficiency, since her duties were so clearly defined once she selected the category to which she belonged. And a child with a grandmother to care for it could fit in anywhere. Young men led a more transient existence. They were likely to congregate at different times in one lodge or another, and a bed would be made for them by putting down a mat between the central pillars and providing it with the necessary skin bedding. Old men also moved about rather freely, staying overnight in various households whenever they were detained late of an evening telling stories or participating in a ceremony. As for the mature man, his married-in household was not considered his "true" home. In his married-in household he was an outsider with formal obligations, which sometimes tended to weigh rather heavily on him. Then he would go where his home really was—that of his sisters and his mother, where they would gladly feed him and take care of him and where he could relax and feel like a child. When this happened, his wife understood, and she knew he would be back after a few days.

621 622 821 778 The only stable and fixed unit of Pawnee life was the village with